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THIS BOOKLET IS AN OUTLINE OF THE  
STORY OF THE KIWIS, FROM THEIR  
BEGINNINGS OVERSEAS IN 1941 WITH THE  
HISTORIC EIGHTH ARMY, TO THE PRESENT  
DAY. IT IS ALSO AN ATTEMPT TO  
SATISFY THOSE OF OUR MANY AUSTRALIAN  
FRIENDS WHO ASK FOR PHOTOGRAPHS  
AND DETAILS OF THE BOYS IN THE SHOW

• SOUVENIR OF THE NEW ZEALAND

# Kiwis Revue

ORIGINALLY THE N.Z. ENTERTAINMENT UNIT  
FORMED WITHIN THE 2nd N.Z. EXPEDITIONARY  
FORCE, MIDDLE EAST.

PRESENTED BY J. C. WILLIAMSON THEATRES LTD.



Three famous men at a Kiwi Show near  
El Alamein, in the Western Desert —  
General Leese, General  
Freyberg and General Montgomery.

*"The best Army show I have seen, in  
this war or the last."*

GENERAL MONTGOMERY





## TERRY VAUGHAN – PRODUCER AND MUSICAL DIRECTOR



*Height*, 5 feet 7 inches ; *Complexion*, fair ; *Eyes*, blue ; *Hair*, fair to middling ; *Appearance*, compact ; *Hobby*, saying he has no time for hobbies ! ; *Sports*, tennis, squash and golf ; *Favourite dish*, loin of lamb ; *Vice*, mixing block-busters and watching other people drink them ; *Pet aversion*, finding spent matches in the box ; *Pre-war occupation*, pianist, conductor, composer ; *Ambition*, to lead a quiet life. Before the war Terry Vaughan spent five years in London, studying, producing and performing music of all kinds from "Bach to boogie". Joining the 34th Anti-tank Battery (of New Zealanders living in England) he was a gunner for two years before the Kiwis were thought of, but being previously well known in New Zealand as a youthful stage enthusiast, he was an obvious choice when Divisional H.Q. started to look about for talent. For his work with the N.Z. Entertainment Unit Terry Vaughan was awarded first a Mention in Despatches, and later an M.B.E. Terry says that the success of the Kiwis is due to the boys' own wealth of talent ; however, they pass the buck to him with a tribute to his qualities as a producer and musician, his customary good humour and quiet leadership.



EGYPT In March, 1941, the New Zealand Middle East Division was resting near Cairo, after the first Desert Campaign.

General Sir Bernard Freyberg, interested in the welfare of his troops, made a quick decision. "I see other Divisions have their own shows — why not mine?" The Staff went ahead. A Kiwi "nest" was arranged at Divisional Headquarters in Maadi, and men were selected from the fighting Units by the usual method of auditions.

## KIWIS DON'T FLY? . . .

Many of the boys found it hard to leave their Units. Some came from Infantry Battalions, some from the Engineers, others from Artillery, and they naturally said goodbye with reluctance to their old comrades of the desert.

The purpose of the show was to entertain the N.Z. Division and other troops of all Services in their own lines in the field, rather than on leave. Consequently, the Kiwis when they spread their metaphorical wings, became a fully self-supporting outfit known officially as the N.Z. Entertainment Unit. Their four three-tonners loaded with the large portable stage, fully curtained, with lighting and sound equipment, a marquee dressing-room, wardrobes, bivvy-tents, cookhouse, Q.M. Stores, rifles and thirty-odd men scattered over the top, became a well-known sight wherever the N.Z. Division wandered, from dusty Syria to the sunny slopes of Northern Italy.

The "hatching" period spent in Maadi involved many raids on both Ordnance Stores and the Cairo markets to gather together instruments, costumes, improvised stage drapes, a generator, and all the other essentials for a big, open-air show. Enthusiastic scrounging proved helpful. The way Lady Freyberg's Hartnell model in black, trimmed with silver fox, stood up to Army life would have been a surprise even to its designer. After a few weeks spent in rehearsal and getting used to the feel of a saxophone instead of a .303 or the plumage of a "Kiwi" instead of shorts K.D., the boys emerged from the shell and gave their first show.

The style of the Kiwis Revue was the same then as it is now — a twelve-piece orchestra and cast of about twenty, presenting a modern revue, not half-a-dozen pierrots on the back of a truck, as some of the H.Q. Brass-hats expected! In fact the only difference in the show is that now the Kiwis introduce uniforms and Army sketches — strictly taboo in the Revues presented to the troops.

Not many Kiwis had donned grease-paint before, but their talent, keenness and careful production soon brought about that speed and polish which is a feature of their shows. The present Producer and Musical Director is one of the original Kiwis, having been with the show since its inception.

Why no gorgeous girls? It was impossible to carry women to the far-off places the Kiwis visited and expect them to live in the desert for months at a time, riding on top of loaded three-tonners and pitching in with the erection of the stage and marquee every day. The Kiwis made up the

deficiency with female impersonators and a glamorous wardrobe — even though the evening gowns were sometimes made of mosquito-netting and the impressive Mounties' uniforms were just K.D. jackets dyed scarlet!

After successfully trying their wings over the hot sands of Egypt the Kiwis' first full flight took them to an ill-fated island across the Mediterranean, where the N.Z. Division had found refuge after the campaign in Greece.

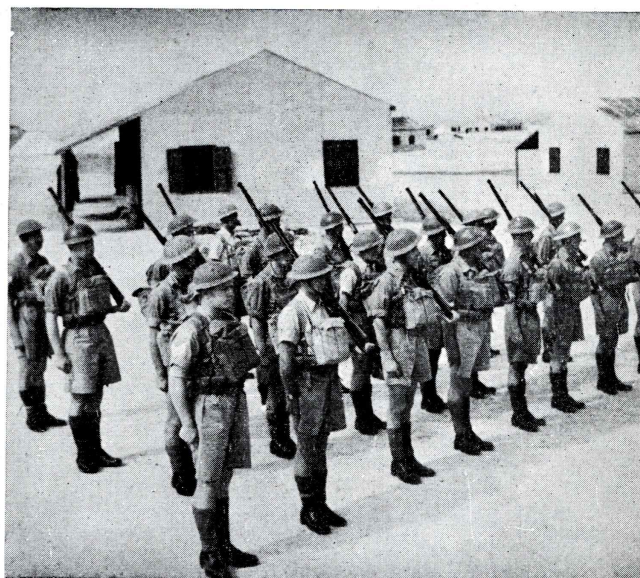
CRETE Signal from Crete to N.Z. Base H.Q. at Maadi — "Please send amusements for troops". Instead of the implied books, cards and Housie, the Kiwis and two brass bands were hastily dispatched. They arrived just in time for the first heavy German air-raids from Greece.

Troop concentrations in the open olive-groves or vineyards being impossible, the boys cleaned up a derelict theatre in Canea (matinees only — tin hats will be worn). One of the lads, when his gag "Tried it once, didn't like it"! was followed by a bomb landing nearer than the rest, cracked, "H'm, didn't like that much either"!

On the fourth day the sky began to fill with enemy aircraft. Most sinister of all were the silent fleets of huge black gliders disgorging strange clouds of white bubbles — each one dangling a kicking, jerking parachutist. It was a case of "drop sax — pick up moosket" and the Kiwis became a platoon of infantry attached to the N.Z. 20th Battalion.

Under the enormous weight of invasion from both sea and air, the defence soon collapsed and the weary retreat across the island began. One of the boys still suffers from a foot injury incurred during that long forced march to safety. The Kiwis were taken off in the mine-layer "Abdil", the last ship to leave Crete. They left behind four as prisoners and of course all the instruments, wardrobes and staging.

WESTERN DESERT Back in Egypt the Kiwis were helped by the N.Z. Patriotic Fund (who financed them originally) to rise, phoenix-like, from the ashes.



THE KIWIS ON PARADE IN MAADI, EGYPT



With the new instruments, costumes, trucks and more personnel they followed the Division once more "up the blue".

Desert routine — up with the vulture, porridge and soya links, dismantling the stage and marquee, loading the trucks, travelling twenty or thirty miles over the wilderness to the next Unit, herrings, bread and cheese and jam, setting up the stage, marquee and trimmings, siesta, dinner of bully-beef, curry and rice pudding and on with the show at night. Moving amongst the New Zealanders, British outfits, and the R.A.F., the Kiwis visited and revisited many places of desert-war fame — Marten Bargush, Sidi Barrani, Mersa Matruh and Burg el Arab.

Instruments dried up in the heat or fell to pieces in the heavy night dews, capricious whirlwinds played havoc with the show, singers lost their voices in the fine dust, the dressing-room marquee was blown flat in sudden squalls of rain, but the warm welcome the boys received made anything seem well worth while.

The first few months of this desert life, with some normal infantry training thrown in for good measure, gave the Kiwis a spirit of comradeship and enthusiasm which they have never lost. But the Army has a restless disposition and the New Zealanders soon left the sands of North Africa for the green mountains to the north-east.

**SYRIA** As usual, the shows were in the open-air, under all sorts of conditions, from the rocky slopes of the Turkish border where it was almost impossible to pitch the stage, to the beaches of Beyrouth, where the Kiwis played to the Australian 6th Div. Rest Camp for a week. While in Beyrouth they met the boys in Jim Davidson's Australian Army Show, who were playing in the local Opera House.

Another contact with the Aussies was in (Syrian) Tripoli, playing at the huge barracks there for several nights. Our brothers-in-arms proved such thorough hosts that on leaving it took the Kiwis quite a few days to recover both their health and the tempo of the show.

A goodwill performance for the civilians of Aleppo alarmed the Kiwis when they found that the audience appeared to be hissing every item. It was a relief to discover that the hissing sound was caused by cries of "bis — bis — biss", meaning "encore"!

In the shadow of the magnificent ruins of Baalbek, the ancient Temple of the Sun, the Kiwis gave a show for the Duke of Gloucester, who was then touring the Middle East.

**PALESTINE** In the land of grapes and oranges the Kiwis distinguished themselves by becoming probably the neatest roadside orchard-lifters in the business. The craving for fresh fruit induced by Army diet proved too much for even the most upright characters.

While playing at Kfar Vitkin and in Tel Aviv at the big Moghrabi Theatre the boys met many more locally stationed Aussies. They often heard a request which became affectionately well-known throughout the N.Z. Division, "Youse Kiwis is the

grouse — couldja lend us twenty mills?" However, back in the Western Desert Rommel's Afrika Korps was pushing steadily on — dangerously near to Alexandria — and both Aussies and New Zealanders soon found themselves once more "up the blue."

**ALAMEIN** For several weeks before the battle of El Alamein the Kiwis played to allcomers on the sand beside the Coast Road. Too close to the line for night shows they played twice daily to audiences limited to five hundred with Bren and Ack-ack protection.

With the stage framed by white sand-dunes, stunted wild figs, date palms, and further back the glowing blue of the Mediterranean, the Kiwis had a grandstand view of the impressive "moving-up" on the Coast Road. The endless convoys of artillery, armour, infantry, ambulances and supplies made an awe-inspiring and ominous impression.

There the unpredictable desert put on a show for the Kiwis. In the middle of a stiflingly hot afternoon both the cast and audience of the "Kiwis Revue" were devastated by a furious storm of pelting rain and huge hailstones the size of walnuts. In five minutes it had passed over, leaving a brilliant sky as blue and innocent as a baby's eyes.

There, too, General Montgomery and General Leese accompanied by General Freyberg, paid one of their several visits to the show, actually only a few days before the big push.

Not many Kiwis will ever forget the ground-shaking roar of the barrage which at 9.40 p.m. on the 23rd October, 1942, heralded the Battle of El Alamein — the biggest barrage in military history — and few of them could deny that all their thoughts and hopes were for the boys in front — the real fighters.

**BENGHAZI** Following in the path of victory, on the great trek across North Africa, the Kiwis played on the outskirts of the once-beautiful city of



AN AUDIENCE OF TOMMIES, WESTERN DESERT





## WALLY PRICOR – SOPRANO



*Height*, 5 feet 10 inches ; *Complexion*, fair ; *Eyes*, hazel ; *Hair*, brown (under the auburn wig) ; *Appearance*, good humoured “man-about-town” ; *Hobby*, collecting ivories ; *Sport*, golf, hockey ; *Favourite Dish*, raw cucumber — unpeeled ; *Vice*, wears heels down on one side ; *Pet Aversion*, precocious children, e.g., himself when young, so he says ; *Pre-war Occupation*, clerk, chorister ; *Ambition*, to eat a grapefruit without being squirted in the eye.

Wally Pricor's amazing soprano voice is no freak (he also has his normal baritone voice) as he was loath to lose his lead as solo boy chorister at Holy Innocents' Church, Dunedin. Accordingly, when his voice broke, he kept singing in his high “falsetto” register, increasing its range and flexibility until it had as true a soprano range as his normal one has baritone. One of the original 1941 Kiwis (ex-2 G.H.) he used his soprano voice in female impersonations in order to provide some much-needed “glamour” for the boys in the Desert, and Wally, besides having his own line of comedy, is the pivot point around which many of the Kiwis' romantic scenes are built.





## TONY REX – BARITONE

*Height*, 5 feet 11 inches ; *Complexion*, fair ; *Eyes*, blue-grey ; *Hair*, light brown and fuzzy ; *Appearance*, cuddlesome, in a big way ; *Hobby*, “a shilling each way !” ; *Sports*, all except baseball and lacrosse ; *Favourite Dish*, food ! ; *Vice*, another helping ; *Pet Aversion*, people who put on an act ; *Pre-war Occupation*, clerk, singer ; *Ambition*, to make a good singing teacher (advtd.). In the Western Desert days, Tony (ex 24th Battalion), was the Kiwis’ chorus master — that is, general “egger-on” of the boys in their efforts to learn and perform choruses, part-songs and routines while coping with the all too frequent dust, rain and sandstorms. His enthusiasm several times resulted in his losing his own voice ! While quite at home in musical comedy, Tony’s real bent is for German lieder, opera, and modern art-songs — but be careful not to call him “arty”!





## JOHN HUNTER – DANCER, ACTOR



*Height*, 5 feet 6 inches ; *Complexion*, pale and interesting ; *Eyes*, hazel ; *Hair*, and wig, both black ; *Appearance*, quiet, dapper, and unassuming ; *Hobbies*, books, interior decorating ; *Sports*, ski-ing, climbing, golf, tennis ; *Favourite Dish*, Chinese fried rice ; *Vices*, just sipping here and there to try them all ; *Pet Aversion*, binoculars in the front row ; *Pre-war Occupation*, too young to have any ; Apparently John Hunter was "born back-stage in a property basket", as he is a natural dancer and actor. Comedy or drama, toe-dancing or tap dancing, all come easily to him. To help satisfy the Kiwis' need for glamour, John assumed female attire and wig.

He is lucky in having the figure and face, when made up, to make the deception most convincing, while a natural charm of manner gives the finishing touch to any of the characterisations he is called on to perform.



Benghazi with its graceful palm avenues, proud battle-scarred buildings and the shell-torn domes of the great marble Cathedral.

Some of the boys, wandering through the back streets, thought they were back in the thick of things again. On rounding a corner they were greeted by random bursts of tommy-gun fire. The sudden explosion of a hand-grenade nearby decided the issue. Being unarmed they took to their heels. On pulling up for breath they were confronted by an irate Major who, not without verbal pyrotechnics, pointed out a sign reading: "KEEP OUT — 8th Army Street-fighting School"!

One of the gags in the Benghazi programme harked back to Egypt days — and possible "soft" jobs at Base H.Q.

"You heard about my decoration?"

"Decorated? You? I don't believe it."

"Oh, yes. M.M. and O.B.E."

"What! Military Medal and Order of the British Empire?"

"No. Maadi Medal — Only Bludgers Eligible!"

**TRIPOLI** The Kiwis played for several weeks to all Services in the Tripoli Opera House. Matinees only, as Tripoli was still being raided every night from across the Mediterranean.

The peaceful arrangement of "Ave Maria", in the Alamein programme, was written to the rather distracting accompaniment of an air-raid overhead. But when a stick of 1,000-pounders landed near enough to blow in the windows of the villa in which the boys were billeted, it must be recorded that "Ave Maria" was hastily put aside in favour of the cellar.

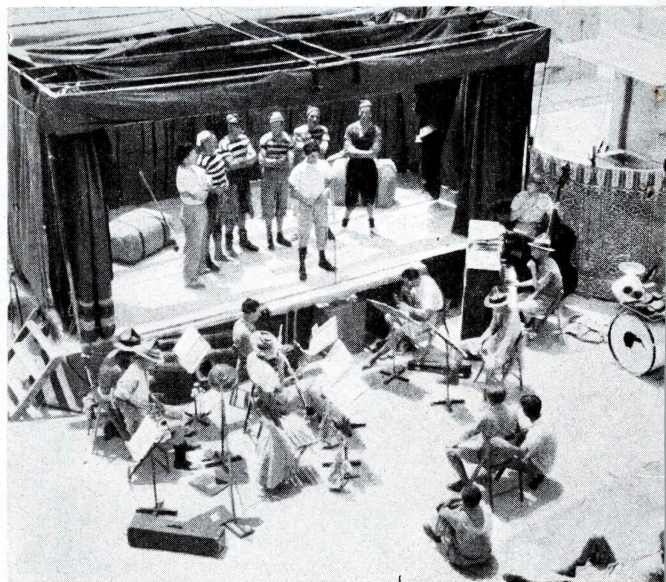
The Kiwis have vivid memories of the open-air shows at Suani for the troops returning from Tunisia, flushed with victory and the first copious supplies of Canadian beer.

Imagine a crowd of six thousand happy warriors pressing so closely round the stage that it was almost impossible to get from the marquee to the stage and back, and out of the question to leave the orchestra "pit" in the sand. One jovial soul was discovered in the dressing-room with a blonde wig on sideways, merrily squirting Max Factor make-up out of the tube to see how high it would go. Another character somehow wandered on stage in the middle of the Finale and went blissfully to sleep under the feet of the performers.

**MALTA** While Jerry was being "liquidated" in Tunisia, General Freyberg sent the Kiwis to Malta. They were the first show to visit that battered little island since war began, and played shows twice a day for the British Infantry and Ack-ack troops in tiny theatres and halls all over the island.

The devastation in Valetta was immense, supplies were still painfully meagre, but the worst raids were over and the sirens only announced the passing overhead of enemy planes bound for the scrap in Tunisia.

Although there primarily to entertain the troops, at the request of Lord Gort, the Kiwis gave several performances for the Maltese civilians. One, for the children of Malta, was a huge success, as cakes of chocolate and photographs of Winston Churchill were distributed to each child.



REHEARSAL IN THE SUN, MALTA

Regretably enough, at the end of the show no trace of the chocolate remained, but the floor of the hall was left ankle-deep in photographs!

**NEW ZEALAND FURLOUGH** Towards the end of 1943, all the old hands of the N.Z. Division were sent home for a three-months' furlough.

The Kiwis went as a complete Unit and devoted some of their leave to a lightning tour of the New Zealand cities and towns, to raise money for the National Patriotic Fund.

Letters home from the Middle East had so often contained references to the "Kiwis Revue" as well as the Egyptian heat, flies, and dust, that the people of New Zealand welcomed this opportunity to see at least one aspect of their soldier sons' Army life, and the tour was an outstanding success.

**CASSINO** On returning from furlough to the Division overseas, the Kiwis found themselves in Italy. Soon after their arrival they were in the craggy Appenines, "behind the scenes" of another famous line.

The N.Z.-ers were camped in the picturesque Venafro Valley a few miles from the ill-fated monastery town of Cassino — strongly held by the Germans for months. While moving amongst their own widely scattered Division the Kiwis played to an isolated British outfit whose nearest neighbours were an enemy outpost three-quarters of a mile away. Jerry didn't get the benefit of the show, however, as, to the Kiwis' relief, the three-quarters of a mile was occupied by a precipitous mountain peak!

On the night of May 11th, 1944, another historic attack was launched — the tremendous assault on Cassino, with New Zealanders and Poles in the spearhead. The world knows the outcome.

But when the storm of that bitter struggle had passed over, the once-romantic town of Cassino presented a scene of ruin and hopeless desolation that can hardly be described.



**JESI** In the little coastal town of Jesi the Kiwis had the pleasure of meeting Aussies once again.

The No. 3 Squadron, R.A.A.F., was stationed at the local aerodrome, a squadron which had already won well-deserved laurels with the Desert Air Force in North Africa. And as hosts they proved to be just as enthusiastic as other Australians the boys had met in the past!

Unfortunately, while the boys were setting up the stage at one end of the runway in preparation for the night's show, a tragedy occurred at the other. A Mustang fighter-bomber returned from a raid with engine trouble, still carrying her two thousand-pound bombs. The landing gear failed to operate and the plane pancaked. One bomb exploded.

The only recognizable part left of the machine and its occupant was a twisted smoking mass of metal that had once been an engine.

**FLORENCE** The beautiful and historic city of the Arno River, with its slender bridges and dreaming palaces, the home of Dante, Galileo and Michaelangelo, fell to the N.Z. Division. Consequently, the Kiwis had the honour of being the first Army show in Florence and also the pleasure of playing once more in a fully-equipped modern theatre.

The Kiwis still treasure one of the 8th Army H.Q. posters reading "When shelling stops and electricity is restored the New Zealand Kiwis will play in the Teatro Savoia". Another theatre in Florence was the biggest in which the Kiwis have ever played, having a seating capacity of three thousand.

It was in this ancient, other-worldly city that the boys first heard the startling German propaganda which proclaimed in all seriousness that New Zealanders were very large, black, and fierce, and actually ate babies!

**ANZIO** As a friendly gesture to the American 5th Army, General Freyberg sent his show over to Anzio Beach-head. The Kiwis played open-air shows at Army H.Q. and at the Military Hospital outside the town.

The two lads who were bewailing their fate at being left on chilly night guard over the stage and props out at the hospital, while the others returned to their billets in Anzio, had the last laugh. No sooner were the boys comfortably "bedded down", than Anzio received her worst pasting from the air to date, presenting a very pretty fireworks display for those out at the hospital.

A few days later Rome fell to the Yanks, and a little persuasion at Army H.Q. led to the Kiwis being the first Army show there, too!

**ROME** In luxury again the Kiwis played to American troops in the newest theatre in Rome — the "Eliseo", complete with revolving stage, elaborate lighting, and a choice of black velvet rose velvet, gold or silver lame stage drapes.

The contrast between this and playing on the old open-air stage in a desert dust-storm or a chilly Italian mountain breeze was overwhelming.



THE KIWIS NEAR RIALTO BRIDGE, VENICE

The G.I.'s turned out to be the most enthusiastic and vociferous audiences the Kiwis ever hoped for. But one night, owing to a technical hitch there were no troops on leave, so the show opened its doors to the Rome civilians. It was probably due to their recent hardships and lack of entertainment, but the Italians left the G.I.'s standing. They even heartily endorsed the burlesque on Grand Opera, and finally whipped up such pro-British sentiments that they climbed on their seats to applaud throughout "God Save the King"!

In Rome the Kiwis came in contact with many well-known people — Irving Berlin, with his "This Is The Army" show; Katherine Cornell and Brian Aherne, playing "The Barretts of Wimpole Street"; and the celebrated tenor, Beniamino Gigli, who proved to be a very friendly and likeable man — especially when one of the boys presented him, in the grand manner, with some bars of chocolate and a tin of bully-beef!

**FORLI** The dismal winter line on the Senio River — snow, mud, bitter cold, sleet and fog. Stalemate — the two armies firmly dug in on opposite banks of the river — night patrols — sudden skirmishes — a "ghost train" on the German side with only nocturnal sound but no substance — the crazy Jerry, six foot three, who used to leap into full view on top of the river bank, go into a wild song and dance, and disappear just as abruptly!

The Kiwis played in Forli in the derelict theatre of the former Fascist Youth Centre. The below-stage dressing rooms were flooded, part of the roof and all the windows and doors were gone. Outside in the Sports Arena flame-throwers at practice roared forth huge gusts of flame across the frozen snow, while through the town rumbled ominously heavy troop and armoured convoys. The last and biggest push was imminent.

On one of the Kiwis' visits to Faenza further up behind the line, one of the trumpet players was killed during an unexpected barrage. He had just





## RALPH DYER —“COMEDIENNE”, DANCER



*Height*, 5 feet 10 inches ; *Complexion*, fair ; *Eyes*, grey ; *Hair*, dark ; *Appearance*, cool and calm ; *Hobby*, collecting theatre programmes ; *Sports*, tennis, sailing ; *Favourite Dish*, oysters ; *Vice*, altering things that were perfectly all right anyway ; *Pet Aversion*, hearty people first thing in the morning ; *Pre-war Occupation*, commercial artist ; *Ambition*, more oysters.

Ralph joined the Kiwis in Italy in the latter part of the war. Previously he had been in the Islands with the N.Z. 3rd Division in “Intelligence”—some mistake, he imagines. Another man who was roped in for “Femme” work, Ralph applied his commercial artist talents to deceiving the lads with a thick layer of glamour. His face and figure luckily supplied a very good basis for the experiment. As well as having a keen sense of comedy, Ralph is an accomplished dancer.



finished playing a number at an entertainment in the Maori Battalion billets when a shell came through the roof and exploded on the landing just outside the door. Two men in the room were killed and several wounded. After so long together, and at this late stage of the war the Kiwis felt their loss very keenly.

**VENICE** Another contrast in conditions. This time, in the city of canals, the Kiwis showed comfortably in the tiny, gilded, heavily be-cherubbed Teatro Goldini, hallowed home of classical Italian playwrights. Through the maze of canals and bridges the boys travelled to work by "duck" (amphibian transport).

Over on the little island of Lido they had once again the facilities of a modern super-cinema. The famous Lido beach, once the fashionable haunt of the world's idle rich, was merely a desolate tangle of barbed wire and live mines.

The story of the entering of Venice has a real "Anzac" flavour. In the final swift thrust up through Italy a Tommy Division was detailed by 8th Army H.Q. to break off to the east and "take" the as yet undamaged city of Venice. However, they were a bit taken aback to be held up on the coast road, and the causeway over the sea, by the prior claim of a big and rather undisciplined convoy. It proved to be composed of the New Zealand Division's leave trucks — in possession already!

**TRIESTE** With the collapse of the war in Europe, the 5th and 8th Armies pushed rapidly on to the North.

The New Zealanders experienced all the uneasiness of the Trieste situation. They and their possible adversaries, Tito's troops, were circling past each other in the streets like wary fighting-cocks.

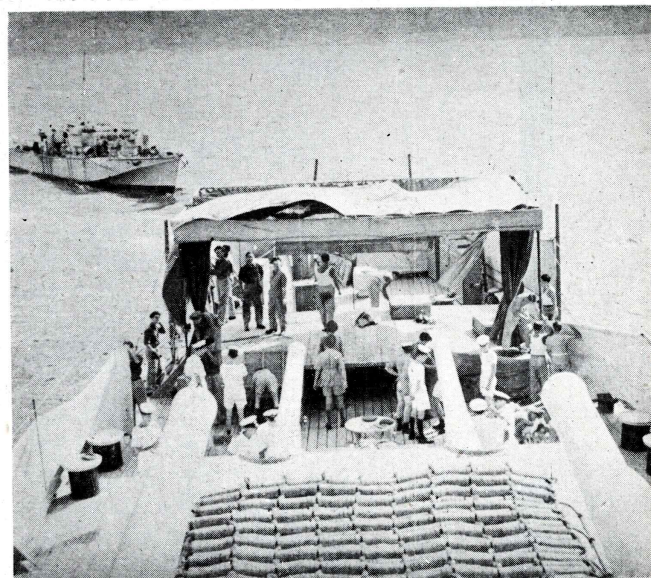
One afternoon the Kiwis were playing in the grounds of a palace built for Napoleon Bonaparte's sister. Word went around that the signal for hostilities would be the firing of Verey lights over the harbour. Suddenly, during the show, everything in Trieste seemed to go up, from ack-ack to rifle-fire.

The panic quickly died down when it was discovered the noise was merely Tito's troops celebrating their leader's birthday!

In Trieste harbour the Kiwis had the honour of playing on board the flagship of the Mediterranean Fleet, H.M.S. "Ajax". It had been raining in the afternoon, and during the show an awning on the afterdeck collapsed, drenching a singer with water during a moving rendering of "Into Each Life Some Rain Must Fall"!

**NEW ZEALAND** The war is over. With the return of the New Zealand Division early in 1946, the Kiwis came home to the "nest". After a long and wandering flight of five years their Army career was ended.

Already, some of the Kiwis who had returned to New Zealand earlier than the others were having great success with a travelling show. With the arrival of the remainder they amalgamated, and in "civvy street" the Kiwis Revue spread its wings once more.



THE STAGE SET UP ON H.M.S. AJAX, TRIESTE HARBOUR

After breaking many theatrical records in their homeland, the boys felt the urge to fly further afield again. Under the J. C. Williamson banner they migrated to Australia in April, 1946.

**AUSTRALIA** The Kiwis' Australian season began with a very successful five weeks in Brisbane, followed by a hectic tour of Queensland, travelling as far north as Cairns.

In nearly every town in Australia old friends came back-stage to greet the Kiwis — soldiers, sailors or airmen who had seen the show in the Middle East or elsewhere, as far afield as Tripoli, Beyrouth and Florence.

The boys met with a wonderful reception in South Australia, where they played to capacity business for seven weeks in the Theatre Royal, Adelaide. The farewell performance evoked a demonstration of Adelaide's affection for the Kiwis which touched the heart of every performer.

The long Trans-continental journey to Perth was fully justified by the record-breaking season of nine weeks at His Majesty's. Once again in the Fair City of Perth the Kiwis met many old friends from Army days. Perth's hospitality and warm farewell will be long remembered by the boys.

After a return season of four weeks in Adelaide, the Kiwis Revue opened at the Comedy Theatre, Melbourne, just before Christmas, 1946. There, the expected season of three months, with three programmes, extended further and further until the second programme did not appear for nine months! The season finally closed with the Kiwis in their third year and fifth Revue in Melbourne, on 6th January, 1949. Their run of 859 performances eclipsed even that of the famous "Diggers", who gave 480 consecutive shows in Brisbane in 1924.

The Kiwis are only too happy to find that the type of show which they presented to the boys overseas is proving so acceptable to their new friends, the people of Australia.



## TRANSFORMATION SCENE

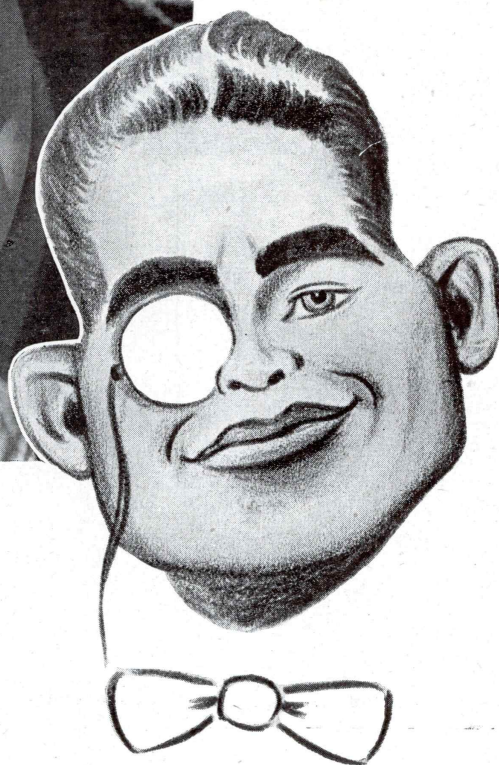
To see Wally Prictor, Ralph Dyer and John Hunter (the caricature below includes Bill Bain instead of Ralph) transform themselves from ordinary men into the attractive creatures they appear on the stage, would be an education to the most experienced "Glamour Girl". Especially so when we recall the first attempts at female impersonation in the Libyan Desert. Called upon, by virtue of their versatility, to supply the necessary glamour for the homesick soldier, the boys were amazingly successful with the limited material available. "Wog"-made wigs and gritty make-up are no real help to synthetic beauty, yet none of the thousands who applauded them ever guessed that beneath those fashionable frocks (made from mosquito netting) lay Army Issue gent's natty underwear.

They worked under difficulties — their dressing room more often than not a couple of tent sides exposed to the cold snows of the Lebanon, the burning khamsins of the desert, or the idle curiosity of the native bystanders. In time, however, our three female impersonators acquired more and more facility in the gentle art of "gilding the lily".

The deception was often so complete that there were many amusing episodes of heartaches and baffled hopes when the real identity of the "girls" was discovered. The conversation between two Tommies during a performance in the desert stands out as a classic example. After carefully studying the "girls" in action, one Tommy turned to the other and said: "Ee lad, yon red head's a reet good bit o' stuff". To which the other replied: "Ay, let's call round arter the show and take 'er back to the bivvie!" Their surprise and disappointment when the wigs came off in the finale can be imagined. One said to his disgusted mate: "Ee, ba goom, lad — it's a rooddy man!"







## GLEN MILLINS – SKETCH ARTIST, “STRAIGHT” MAN



*Height*, 5 feet 11 inches on tip toe ; *Complexion*, ruddy ; *Hair*, black ; *Eyes*, trusting brown ; *Appearance*, “Esquire” ; *Hobbies*, collecting books on the theatre, finishing other people’s crosswords ; *Sports*, squash, cricket, weight lifting (small ones) ; *Vices*, too neat at home (excellent husband) ; *Favourite Dish*, devilled kidneys and mushrooms ; *Pet Aversion*, untidy people, e.g., all his visitors, apparently ; *Ambition*, to design, build and own his own home ; *Pre-war Occupation*, call boy at Drury Lane, repertory actor, scriptwriter.

Glen Millins, with the voice and poise of a born “straight” man, usually is fated to suffer the cracks of a comedian, but can make a lot out of a little light comedy himself. He has written many good scripts for the Kiwis, notably his own monologues, and with Terry Vaughan “Can Can Girls” and “Girl Guides”. One of the earliest Kiwis (ex-34th Anti-Tank Battery), he was stage manager for the show right through the Middle East Campaign.





## TAFFY OWEN – BARITONE



*Height*, 6 feet ; *Complexion*, ruddy ; *Eyes*, blue ; *Hair*, dark and crinkly ; *Appearance*, “rude health” ; *Hobbies*, nature study ! *Sports*, boxing and soccer ; *Favourite Dish*, raw steak (honest ! ) ; *Pet Aversion*, mean people ; *Vices*, the lot (you needn’t believe that) ; *Pre-war Occupation*, miner, shearer, frenchpolisher, barman, singer ; *Ambition*, to own his own pub !

Taffy’s real name is Robin Dai Owen, giving the clue to his Welsh origin, although he went to New Zealand at an early age. One of the original Kiwis (ex-18th Battalion) he has been invaluable not only for his fine voice but also his enthusiasm, endless good humour and loyalty to the boys. As caricatured above, Taffy introduced the hit tune “Pedro the Fisherman” to the Division in Italy.





WAR OFFICE,  
WHITEHALL,  
LONDON, S.W. 1.

MESSAGE TO "THE KIWIS" FROM FIELD-MARSHAL THE  
VISCOUNT MONTGOMERY OF ALAMEIN, KG, GCB, DSO.

I was delighted to learn of the tremendous success that "The Kiwis" have achieved in Australia. I understand that the Company broke all records when it held its 600th performance at the Comedy Theatre, Melbourne.

I remember very well "The Kiwis" starting life as a concert party in the 8th Army. They did a fine job of work in those days by helping to keep up the morale of the fighting men.

Since then they have achieved great heights. I congratulate all members of "The Kiwis" and send them my best wishes for future successes.

*Montgomery of Alamein*  
*Field-Marshal*

( MONTGOMERY of ALAMEIN  
Field-Marshal )

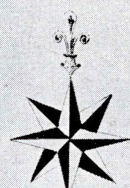
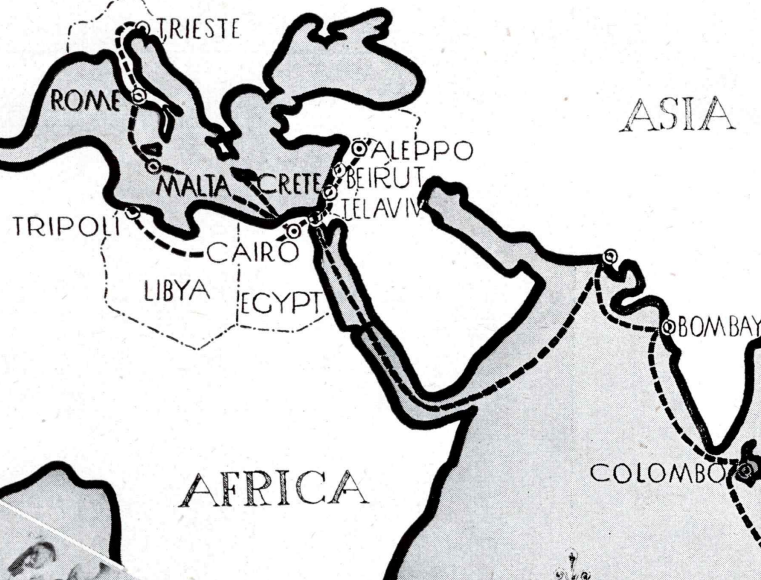




EUROPE

ASIA

AFRICA











## CECIL MORRIS – MANIPULATOR AND MAGICIAN

*Height*, 6 feet ; *Complexion*, dark ; *Eyes*, brown ; *Hair*, thinning, unfortunately ; *Appearance*, suave ; *Hobbies*, photography and magic ; *Sports*, golf and swimming ; *Favourite Dish*, genuine Italian spaghetti ; *Vices*, reading late in bed ; *Pet Aversion*, biscuits in bed ; *Pre-war Occupation*, sales manager, shop-owner, yeast brewer, insurance inspector and magician ; *Ambition*, to see the world, with still more magic !

Ces Morris is one of the lucky magicians who combine talent with the essential "Mandrake" appearance. One of the secrets of his success is probably that he enjoys doing his tricks as much as people enjoy watching them. In every country the Kiwis have visited he has found fellow-wizards with whom to swap spells and incantations. In the Army, Ces was the Kiwis' Quartermaster — just the job !





## STAN WINEERA – COMEDIAN, DANCER



*Height*, 5 feet 9 inches ; *Complexion*, suntan (when made up) ; *Hair*, dark and falling ; *Eyes*, big ; *Appearance*, gets five o'clock shadow around mid-day ; *Hobbies*, (a) trying to figure out why his water colours never look good enough to frame, (b) trying to figure out why he wants to frame them, anyway ; *Sport*, likes watching any sport ; *Vice*, wife says sleeping too late in the mornings ; *Favourite Dish*, plum pudding ; *Pet Aversion*, rehearsals, especially in the morning ! ; *Ambition*, to live long enough to see what happens to Superman ; *Pre-war Occupation*, sheet metal and tube steel engineer, tubular steel manufacturer.

Take a pair of wondering eyes, a nervous easing of the collar, a neat pair of tap shoes, a sure touch at light comedy, and you have Stan Wineera. Another man who writes his own scripts, such as "Life of the Party" and "The Property Man", he can always be relied on to fill a "spot". Having a little of the blood of an early Maori chieftain flowing in his veins, Stan is the Kiwis' authority on such matters as the correct pronunciation of the "Songs of the Maori Battalion".





## LEOPOLD POPOWSKI CONDUCTING "WILLIAM TELL"

*Terry Vaughan's satire on conductors' mannerisms, as seen, together with the boys in the band, through the eyes of a caricaturist.*



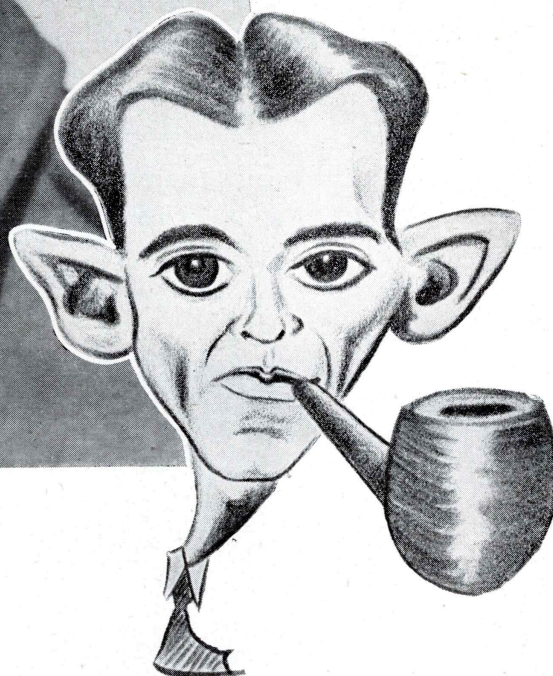
## JOHN REIDY - COMEDIAN

*Height*, 5 feet 11 inches ; *Complexion*, schoolgirl ; *Eyes*, grey ; *Hair*, blond — fair dinkum ; *Appearance*, offstage—Dormouse, onstage—Mad Hatter ; *Hobby*, amusing people ; *Sports*, riding, rugby, cricket ; *Favourite Dish*, tomato soup, roast pork ; *Vice*, amusing people ; *Pet Aversion*, vegetable-throwing audiences — fruit, *please* ; *Ambition*, to settle up then settle down ; *Pre-war Occupation*, on “Waikato Times”.

John puts boundless enthusiasm and energy into everything he does, onstage and off. Before joining the Kiwis in their very early days, he provided all the light relief for his Unit, the 34th Anti-tank Battery. His droll style and “trade-mark”—the shock of fair hair — soon became popular throughout the N.Z. Division. As well as his sense of comedy, John is lucky in having a fine baritone voice.







## ROY McDOUGALL – TENOR



*Height*, 5 feet 11 inches ; *Complexion*, dark ; *Eyes*, spaniel ; *Hair*, wavy black ; *Appearance*, old-world novel ! ; *Hobbies*, cabinet-making (e.g., knocking up a meat safe) ; *Sports*, athletics, rugby, golf, and swimming ; *Favourite Dish*, lamb, green peas with roast potatoes and parsnips ; *Vices*, all, in rotation ; *Pet Aversion*, suicide blondes ; *Pre-war Occupation*, printer ; *Ambition*, to be his own boss.

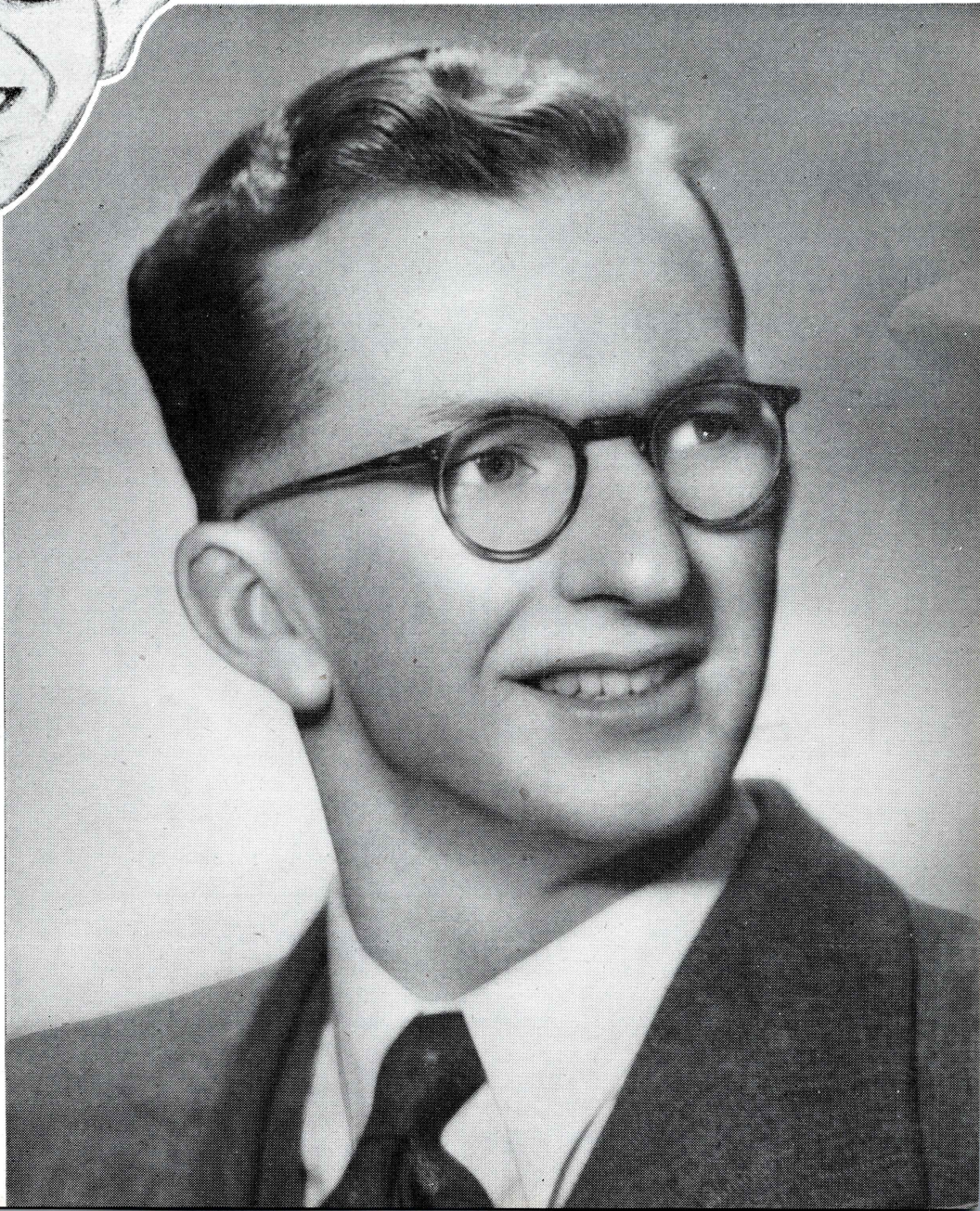
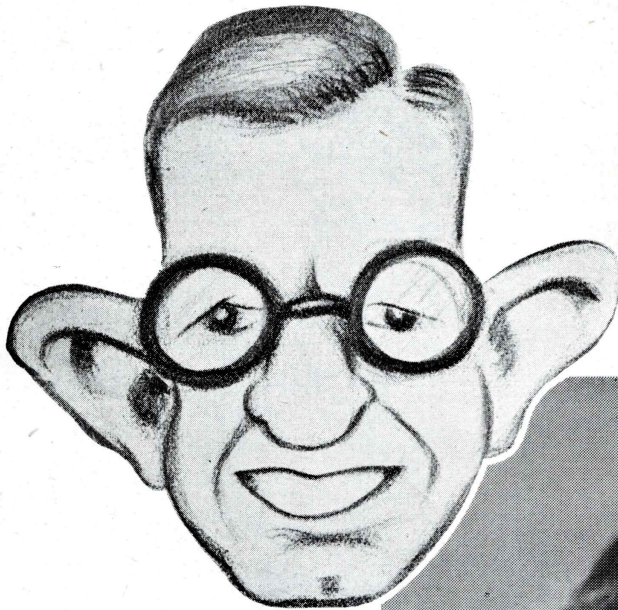
Roy joined the Kiwis in Italy (ex-26th Battalion) and says he preferred the horrors of war to his audition. He has a fine and reliable tenor voice, learns quickly, and if in a chorus routine can always be relied on to walk confidently in the wrong direction for the first few nights ! Roy is the good-natured, friendly type and is so quiet and reticent that he may be suspected of being a bit of a dark horse.



## MORRIS DOUBLE – BASS BARITONE

*Height*, 5 feet 11 inches ; *Complexion*, fair ; *Eyes*, blue ; *Hair*, mouse ; *Appearance*, husky ; *Hobby*, books ; *Sports*, mountaineering, hockey, golf, tennis, swimming ; *Favourite Dish*, vermicelli custard and cream ; *Vice*, saving money ; *Pet Aversion*, being in a confined space ; *Pre-war Occupation*, shop assistant ; *Ambition*, to bawl out his own shop assistants !

Morris Double's voice has been a solid foundation for the Kiwis' chorus and also a useful solo voice ever since the show began in Egypt. Transferring originally from an Infantry Battalion, he is one of those good-humoured, energetic people who are always around when there's a job to be done, whether it's singing, or fitting up the stage in the desert. He can be summed up in one word — reliability !







## THE KIWIS REVUE ORCHESTRA ON STAGE

The "band" has always been an important feature of the Kiwi shows. As well as a stage band presentation of their own, the boys are called on to accompany throughout the show in all types of music, from "swing time to Lilac Time." The luxury of playing in modern theatres, after an orchestra pit which was merely a shallow trench in the sands of the Western Desert, or a patch of uneven grass in Italy, means as much to the instrumentalists as it does to the stage cast.

The Kiwis' orchestra is very much a part of the "team", as they not only help the boys on stage with accompanying music, but also contribute various novelty quartettes of different instrumentation in each programme.

Although the bulk of the arranging has always been done by Terry Vaughan, some stylish modern arrangements have been turned out for the boys by Niel Randrup, Don Richardson, Wally Barton and Jack Roberts, all members of the band.



ROY CAMPBELL, Stage Manager, brings a wealth of experience to the Kiwis. Whether it's six months at La Scala or one night in Wagga Wagga, the curtain goes up at eight.



DAVE STAFFORD featured as the mad violinist in "William Tell". A mainstay of the band and one of the original saxophone players with the Kiwis (ex-19th Battalion), he has many tales to tell of their wandering overseas, from the orchestra's angle.



*SAXOPHONES —*

*doubling clarinet (left to right) :*

DON RICHARDSON,  
DAVE STAFFORD,  
NOEL HABGOOD,  
NIEL RANDRUP.



## RHYTHM

*Piano*, JACK ROBERTS

*Bass (doubling violin)*,  
HARRY UNWIN

*Drums*, ALAN BROWN



## BRASS

*Left to right :*  
BILL PRITCHARD  
DES BLUNDELL  
WALLY BARTON  
NORM D'ATH





## ERNIE FISH – COMEDIAN

*Height*, 5 feet 10 inches ; *Complexion*, fair ; *Eyes*, grey-blue ; *Hair*, wavy brownette ; *Appearance*, surprising (teeth made in Italy) ; *Hobby*, all four-footed friends ; *Sports*, all athletics (Otago 220 yds. champion for three years with record 22  $\frac{3}{5}$  seconds), golf and tennis ; *Favourite Dish*, anything but fish ; *Vices*, plenty, but

won't say ; *Pet Aversion*, anyone who doesn't like animals ; *Pre-war Occupation*, men's outfitter ; tailor ; *Ambition*, to take back a souvenir of Australia. (He's married one. Ed.)

Ernie Fish is another lucky man with the right appearance and the right name for his job — comedy. He has always been interested in all branches of stage work (including production). In the Kiwis he is an enthusiastic member of the sports committee ; in fact when overseas in Egypt, Ernie represented the N.Z. Division as a runner, against Great Britain and South Africa.



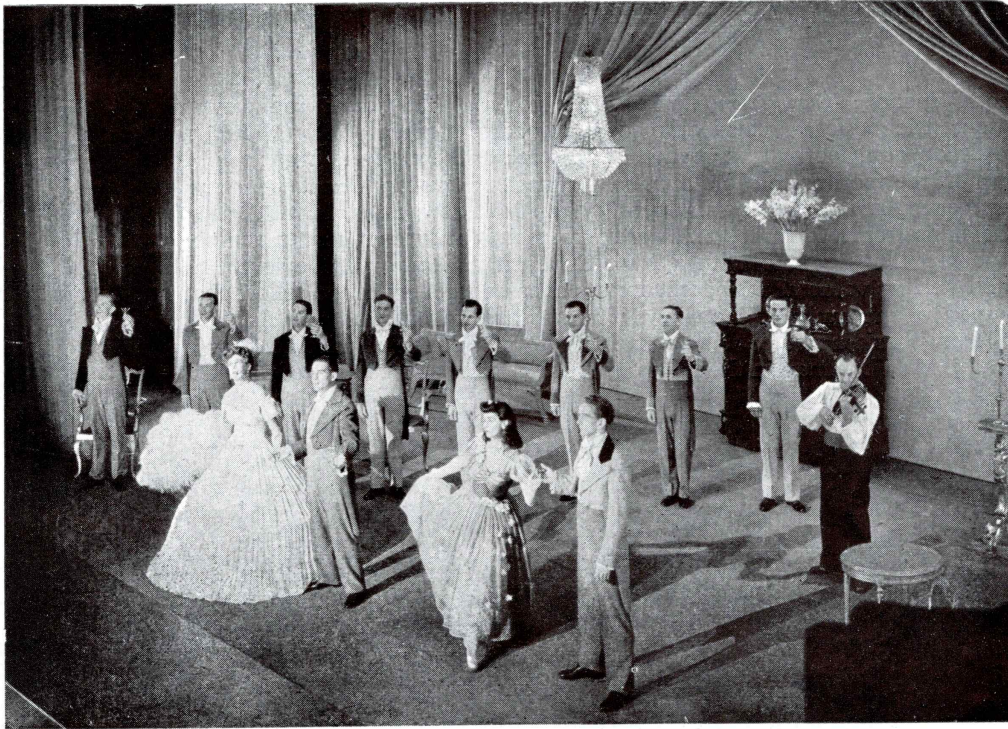


THE GAY NINETIES — a glimpse of the finale to "Alamein"



MUSIC BY TSCHAIKOWSKY — a colourful scene from "Benghazi"





"LEHARIANA"; to the music of one of Vienna's favourite composers

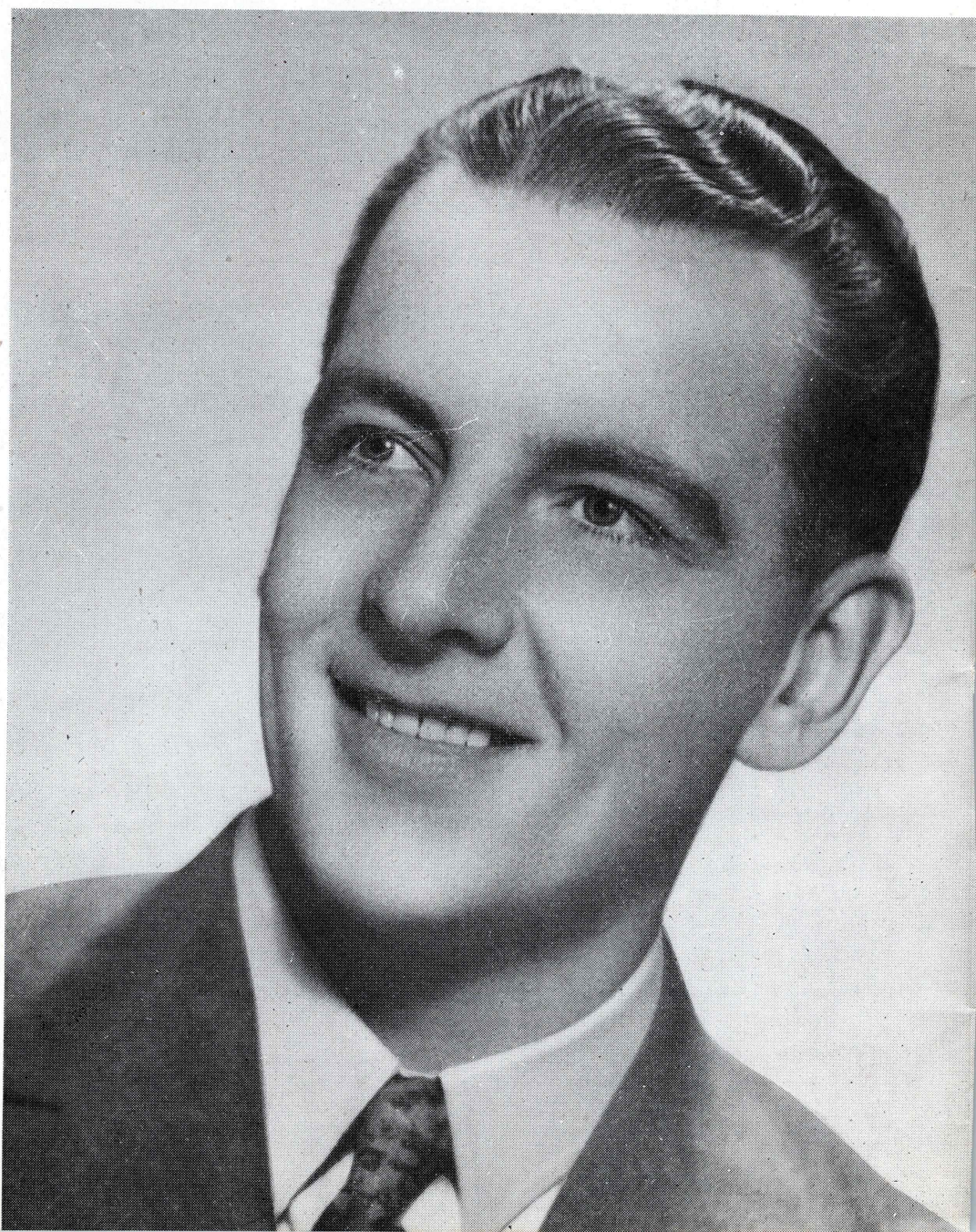


Finale of "TRIPOLI"; the Kiwis' SATIRE ON GRAND OPERA



## WREN MATHEWS – BARITONE

*Height*, 5 feet 9 inches ; *Complexion*, dark ; *Eyes*, green ; *Hair*, dark and wavy ; *Appearance*, romantic ; *Hobby*, classical records, especially opera ; *Sports*, tennis, swimming, cricket, golf, football ; *Favourite Dish*, steak and well-done eggs ; *Vice*, leaves the cap off the toothpaste ; *Pet Aversion*, lorgnettes ; *Pre-war Occupation*, clerk, business manager ; *Ambition*, to sing in opera. Wren Matthews is the Kiwis' "guest artist", as he hails from Adelaide, S.A. He was temporarily engaged to replace Tony Rex who left for England with a N.Z. Government Bursary. However, he proved of such sterling value as a singer, sports player and general good fellow that he has remained in the ranks of the show, if not as a Kiwi then as an "Anzac". Wren has a strong baritone voice with a fine ring to it, just the requirement for a "romantic lead". As a batsman in the Kiwis' 1st XI he is one of the hopes of the side.

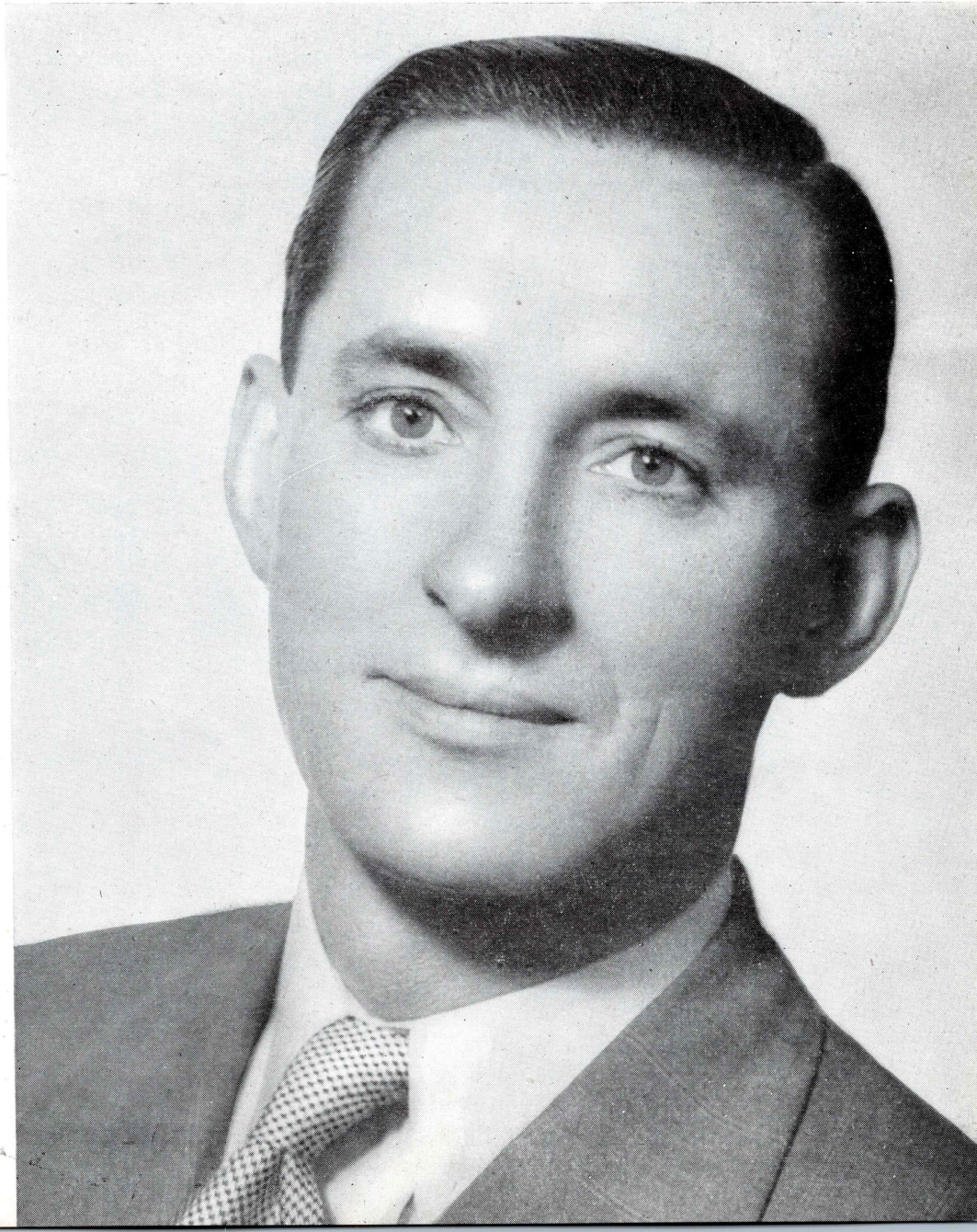




## JAMES LAVERY – TENOR

*Height*, 5 feet 11 inches ; *Complexion*, olive ; *Eyes*, grey ; *Hair*, black ; *Appearance*, kissed the blarney-stone ; *Hobby*, making things — anything ! ; *Sports*, golfing, walking ; *Favourite Dish*, Chicken Maryland ; *Vice*, Irish songs ; *Pre-war Occupation*, engineer ; *Pet Aversion*, loud wireless sets ; *Ambition*, Gleneagles under par.

Jim Lavery spent his youth in New Zealand and his war years with the R.A.A.F. but traces of his Irish forebears are still apparent in his tenor singing, his pleasant stage manner, and happy-go-lucky disposition. Having the makings of a champion himself, Jim is one of the leaders of the Kiwis' band of golf enthusiasts.





# ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA

A Burlesque Version of the Age Old Story as presented in the first programme "Alamein".



## MODERN SCIENCE

a hilarious sketch  
from the second  
programme "Tripoli".

## CIRCUS LIFE

A glimpse of the Finale to  
the Kiwis' third — "Benghazi".

Page 32







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